

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sporting Celebs Score Funds for Foster Children and Youth at the SOS International Foster Awards Gala

Vancouver, British Columbia The local chapter of the world's largest non-denominational child development charity is pleased to announce the inaugural SOS International Foster Awards Gala in downtown Vancouver on November 23, 2017 at 6:00 pm. Guests will enjoy the spectacular views of the city at the Law Courts Inn, **while rubbing elbows with celebrities that include CFL legend Michael "Pinball" Clemons as keynote speaker, Marco Iannuzz of the B.C. Lions as auctioneer, and Grey Cup champion Lyle Green.**

The purpose of the SOS International Foster Awards Gala is to recognize leadership and success in foster care, to celebrate inspiring former foster children who have triumphed over adversity, and to raise money to help current foster children and youth in dire need.

While this new and truly impactful award will recognize a former foster child who has beat the odds and found success, **the goal of the event is to raise \$100,000 to help current children in care who typically end up struggling with drugs, homelessness, mental illness, and abuse before and after aging out of the system.** SOS Children's Village B.C. is setting the standard for the care of foster children and youth in British Columbia. Indeed, the village in Surrey - the only SOS Children's Village in Canada - has a track record of 100% of foster youth graduating high school within two years of expected date, versus only 40% of foster youth graduating in the provincial foster care system.

As for the keynote speaker, few people exemplify the qualities of personal excellence, teamwork, community leadership, and overcoming the odds better than **CFL legend Michael "Pinball" Clemons.** With boundless energy, Pinball's talks centre on the potential for each of us to achieve anything we set our minds to. Unabashedly emotional and impactful, he shows us how to put heart into everything we do. Pinball is a member of **The Order of Ontario**, has been inducted into the **Canadian Football Hall of Fame** and the **Canadian Sports Hall of Fame**, and is a **Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal** recipient.

"Against All Odds is the theme for the evening," said Douglas Dunn, executive director of the charity. "And although SOS Children's Village B.C. is a small village in the SOS International family, against all odds we will be hosting this international event recognizing outstanding leadership and success with nominees from the 134 countries, 572 villages, and the over 2,600 programs that comprise the global SOS federation."

With 200 guests attending, the evening features a delicious buffet dinner and dessert, fine wines and craft beer, live entertainment, exciting live and silent auctions, a fabulous trip raffle, a 50/50

draw, and **a little surprise from SOS villages around the world**. Rumour is that special video greetings will be shown from several countries who have sent their personal congratulations to the SOS International Foster Awards Gala.

The venue is Vancouver's best kept secret. Designed by Arthur Erickson as the heart of the iconic Vancouver Law Courts building, the newly renovated **Law Courts Inn** is situated on the 4th floor of the Supreme Court building at 800 Smithe Street. The dining room features floor to ceiling windows with an extraordinary view of the downtown cityscape.

Sponsorship opportunities for the gala are still available, but ticket availability at this time is extremely limited. Visit www.sosbc.org/gala for full event details.

About SOS Children's Village BC

SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-governmental, non-denominational child development organization and cares for fostered, orphaned, or abandoned children. It has existed for over 65 years with presence in 134 countries and 572 Villages. British Columbia is home to the only SOS Children's Village in Canada. SOS Children's Village BC provides homes, a supportive community, and programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

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For more information please contact:

William Brennan, Manager of Communications
SOS Children's Village BC
T: (604) 574-2964 ext. 104
E: williambrennan@sosbc.org Web: www.sosbc.org

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